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# CONFERENCE *connection*

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**SOUTHEAST UCC Conference**



**August 1, 2018**

## **From the Conference Minister**

Dear Friends,

The beginning of August, for some there is one more lazy month of summer and for others it is the start of school and all the craziness that entails. Whichever way the month of August is for you, may you enjoy it and the memories it will produce. So many times, we all race around and forget to notice and enjoy our lives for what they are: a treasured and precious gift from God.



This summer has been a time of reflection and planning for those of us who work on behalf of all of you in the conference. We have taken time to think and dream, to plan and ponder. Plans for next year's annual meeting are underway, keep the dates of May31-June 2 ready as we gather and welcome UCC General Minister and President, Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, as our special guest. At the Board of Directors retreat next month, the board will begin the process of putting together a game plan for the future of the conferences thanks to all of your hard work, discernment, and prayer.

Sometimes it feels like all this planning, discerning, prayer, and pondering is just taking precious time away from the real work of doing things. However, this time of contemplation and asking God's presence to be with us as we discern our future is the most important thing we can do as people of faith. We get caught up in wanting to look efficient and timely, at times to our own detriment. Times of planting seeds, and tending to the young saplings is integral to the health and bounty of the garden. The same can be said of our conference. So, I hope you have time to tend to your own

gardens: whether that be real ones or the garden of your soul in this month of August. And may we all be ready to harvest what we have lovingly tended in times of our contemplation.

Blessings,  
Marie

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### **Prayer List**

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2018. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers. [Click here to download the entire 2018 prayer list.](#)

#### Week of August 6

- Unity UCC; Montgomery, Alabama
- Marsha Brown
- Kathryn Hauk
- Lewis Kola
- Robert Rezash
- Sonya Gravlee

#### Week of August 13

- First Congregational UCC; Savannah, Georgia
- Mary Brueggemann
- Rose Hermonat
- Derrick Rice

- George Thomas
- June Boutwell

## Prayer Concerns

We hold **Carrole Moss** close in prayer as she grieves the loss of her sister.

## Churches in Transition

Garden of Grace, Columbia, SC; Emmanuel, Greenville, SC; First Congregational, Birmingham, AL; Pilgrimage, Marietta, GA; Sandy Creek, Lafayette, AL; Church of the Savior, Alpharetta, GA

## News from our Local Congregations

### Pleasant Hill Community Church Sponsors Fund Raising “Shrimp Boil”

The Justice & Mission Core Ministry of the Pleasant Hill Community Church, UCC sponsored a fund raising “Shrimp Boil” to support the Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi last week. Back Bay Mission is a community ministry of the UCC serving the Mississippi Gulf Coast and the wider church community since 1922 with faithful witness for social justice and compassionate service to the poor and marginalized.



In the photo above, PHCC members Sharon Weible and Mary Ruth, Chair of the Event, dish out servings of shrimp prepared by Lorreta and Dave Heigle (on the right) who brought their equipment from Ohio to boil the shrimp.

[Read more about the event and view a photo gallery on our website.](#)

## News from the Wider Church

## UCC Health Plan Rates for 2019

The Pension Boards is pleased to announce the following premium rates and plan enhancements for the 2019 plan year, effective January 1, 2019:

- Non-Medicare Health Plan: 2% increase
- Medicare Supplement Plan: 2% increase
- Dental Plan: 4% increase
- Vision Plan: no change
- Life Insurance and Disability Income Plan: no change

The following benefit enhancements are also approved as of January 1, 2019:

- Dental Plan: the Annual Benefit Maximum per person is increased from \$1,800 to \$2,000. Annual Preventive Services (e.g., cleanings and examinations) will not reduce the Annual Benefit Maximum.
- Vision Plan: The Annual Allowance for frames and contact lenses is increased from \$140 to \$150.

As is the customary practice, churches/employers and individual plan participants will receive detailed information by mail later this Summer regarding applicable rates for 2019.

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## Useful News from the Insurance Board

Check out the [summer issue of The Steward](#), the quarterly newsletter from the Insurance Board, to learn some important information for your local congregation. Topics in this issue include:

- Opioids and Your Church: What you Should Know
- Open Your Doors, Not Your Risk
- Copyright Trouble for Churches
- Tips for Planning a Mission Trip

Back issues of The Steward can be found on the [Insurance Board website](#).

Insurance Board is a nonprofit corporation established by the participating Conferences of the United Church of Christ. IB administers a property and liability insurance program serving churches and related entities within 3 mainline Protestant denominations: United Church of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Presbyterian Church (USA); as well as for the Alliance of Baptists faith community.

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## The Costs of Ministry – And Who Pays?

Possible changes to the clergy tax benefit of designated housing allowance – clarification anticipated by [UCC General Counsel](#) as soon as next year – cast into fresh relief the options for church employers and ministers. Churches can compensate clergy more as an off-set. Ministers can adjust and moderate their financial decisions. These changes may be uncomfortable on both sides, but are necessary within a trend of [growing financial stress](#) on clergy employment.

Churches should continue to designate housing allowance each year, a figure to cover “fair rental value of the home including furnishings and utilities.” Meanwhile courts and governmental agencies will proceed to make their final decisions, and churches should stay tuned for developments. [Read the rest of the article on the CARD website.](#)

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## National Youth Leadership Board

Rev. Trayce Stewart, UCC’s new Minister for Youth and Young Adult Engagement is looking for youth (13-18) to serve on the Youth Leadership Table which is a sub-committee of the National Youth Event planning team. We have been promoting this youth group at the four regional youth events this summer and as of right now have 20 applicants. While we rejoice about this great response, we are also mindful that there are many who are not represented by that number. Sadly we do not have any youth of color which makes the potential group a very homogenous team that I worry may not be fully equipped to speak to the needs and desires of youth who do not look like them. While the preliminary deadline for nominations has passed, we have chosen to extend it in hopes of securing the names and nominations of youth in color. To complete a nomination on behalf of a youth [visit this site](#).

## Training and Learning Opportunities





## Healthy Boundary Training: it's Mandatory!

As most of us are aware, Healthy Boundary training is now mandatory in the United Church of Christ.

So, it's that time again! Healthy Boundary 101 training is fast approaching and will be offered on **August 18, 2018 at Brookmeade Congregational UCC**, 700 Bresslyn Rd, Nashville TN 37205.

This mandatory training is offered several times yearly so that we can meet our deadline of having all clergy trained by December 2019. If you are unable to attend the August training, the next opportunity will be **October 6th, 2018 at First Congregational UCC**, 1024 Center St., North, Birmingham, AL 35204.

Please note that all training sessions are scheduled for 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. It is important that you arrive on time and are present for the entire session in order to receive your certificate of completion.

Each session is \$60.00 and may be paid thru our online registration. This fee includes lunch, snacks all workbooks and materials for the session. If you are unable to register online, please contact me or Heather Fosburgh so that we may assist you with the process.

Blessings,  
Min. Carrole Moss  
Healthy Boundary Trainer

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## Give Your Congregation a Jumpstart on a Year of Vital Worship

Dr. Marcia McFee, one of the foremost worship leaders and educators of

our day (and a familiar face to the Southeast Conference), will lead congregational worship teams in a three-day planning retreat on September 9-12, 2018 at the Lake Junaluska Conference Center in North Carolina. This retreat with Dr. McFee will enable your worship team to learn to consistently produce vital and passionate worship—without getting burned out.

The retreat is intended for congregational worship teams. The registration fee is \$550 per congregation bringing from two to six persons -- the more the better. An individual participant may register for \$350. Additional costs for meals and housing. For detailed information and to register, [go to this link](#). Direct questions about registration to [mark@marciamcfee.com](mailto:mark@marciamcfee.com) or 773-316-8892.

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## Grants Available for up to \$15,000 for Pastoral Study

The Louisville Institute offers pastoral leaders the gift of time and the resources to investigate issues related to the Christian life of faith, North American religious practices and institutions, and/or major challenges facing contemporary society. The Pastoral Study Project program (PSP) enables pastoral leaders to bracket daily work routines in order to pursue a pressing and significant question for the life of faith.

Grants of up to \$15,000 support independent or collaborative study projects – projects that privilege pastoral perspectives and rhythms and honor grassroots research conducted by skilled clergy. PSP grantees may use a variety of platforms to share what they learn with a wider audience, extending their leadership in ways that can benefit the broader church and society in North America. [Learn more on their website](#).

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